

Go Fish

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Teaser

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The scene looks almost primitive, hedonistic as students dance around a BONFIRE to MUSIC emanating from a boombox.

MOVING THROUGH the throng, and past the pyre, we find XANDER, WILLOW and CORDELIA warming themselves.

XANDER

All I'm saying is, it was a stupid idea to have a victory party on the beach. it's officially nippy. So say my nips.

WILLOW

I think it's festive. A party with nature.

CORDELIA

Well, it's the team's choice. It was their victory.

XANDER

(scoffs)

Team. Swim team. Hardly what I call a team. The Yankees... Abbott and Costello... Those were teams.

CORDELIA

Jealous?

XANDER

No. Yes. But more no than yes.
I mean, look at that...

XANDER'S POV - DODD McALVY

a lanky student with bad skin dances with two pretty coeds.

XANDER (O.S.)

Dodd McAlvy. Last month he's the freak with jicama breath who waxes his back. He wins a few meets and suddenly he's inherited the "cool" gene.

CORDELIA

Hey, all I know is, my cheerleading

squad's wasted a lot of pep on
losers. it's about time our school
excelled at something.

WILLOW
You're forgetting our high mortality rate.

XANDER
(with pumped pride)
We're number one!

ANGLE: BUFFY

sitting cross-legged in the sand, away from the crowd. SOFT MOONLIGHT highlights
her features as she watches the tide roll in, looking positively...

VOICE (O.S.)
Beautiful...

She glances over. WIDEN to find CAMERON, a lean but muscular senior, as he sits
next to her.

CAMERON
Isn't it?

BUFFY
Yeah. It's so... so...

CAMERON
Eternal. Our true mother giving
birth to new life, and devouring
old... Always adaptable and
nurturing, yet constant and merciless.

BUFFY
(Impressed)
Boy. I was just gonna go with 'big'
and 'wet.'

Cameron smiles at that, in a not uncharming way.

CAMERON
Me and some of the other guys on the
team come out once a week to train in
it. Swim against the current.

BUFFY
Funny. That's just how I feel most
of the time. So, Cameron Walker...

She holds up an imaginary microphone.

BUFFY
You've just won the state semi-
finals, what are you gonna do now?

He looks at her warmly for a moment. Buffy momentarily finds herself affected by
his gaze.

CAMERON
I'm going to hang out with Buffy
Summers. Get to know her.

Taken aback, Buffy lowers the "mic."

BUFFY
Uh, whoa. Pause button. Cam--

CAMERON
Hey, no pressure. I'm just saying I
like being around you, that's all.

The look on Buffy's face tells us she feels the same way.

They hear SHOUTS and LAUGHTER, the cruel, sadistic-type and turn to see...

ANGLE: DODD

pushing someone's head down into a metal beverage tub filled with ice water as
several witnesses laugh. The someone pulls himself out, gulping for air. It's
JONATHON.

DODD
C'mon, Jonny, you gotta hold your
breath longer than that if you ever
want to make the team. Somebody
time him.

As he shoves Jonathon's head back down into the tub,

BUFFY appears.

She grabs Dodd's wrist and twists his arm behind his back in an armlock. He lets go
of the underclassman.

DODD
Hey!

BUFFY notices

INSERT: DODD'S FOREARM TATTOO

a grinning, cigar-chomping shark.

BUFFY
Classy tat. I take it they ran out
of Tweety-Bird.

ANGLE: Dodd's feet

as a delicate female foot sweeps them out from under him. He falls, looks up to see

DODD'S POV - BUFFY

standing over him. Cameron behind him, smiling.

DODD

What's your problem?

CAMERON
Had it coming, bro.

One of Dodd's friends, GAGE, pulls him away.

GAGE
Chill, dude. A bunch of us are
gonna take a little night dip down
the beach. You in?

DODD
(eyeing Buffy)
Whatever.

He and Gage take off. Buffy turns to Jonathon.

BUFFY
Let's find you a towel.

JONATHON
(incensed)
Why don't you mind your own business.
I can handle this without your help.

He storms off. Buffy turns to Cameron

BUFFY
Isn't it fun to hang out with me?

EXT. DOWN THE BEACH - MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT)

WE MOVE with Dodd and Gage, walking to their little sub-party down the beach. It's really dark and a little creepy as they move away from the music.

DODD
Man, that chick gives me the creeps.

Dodd suddenly stops, sensing something. He looks around.

DODD'S POV - THE OCEAN

We watch the surf roll in and out again.

ANGLE: GAGE

as he continues to trudge on. Then he pauses and sniffs the air with a sour expression.

GAGE
Dude. What is that foulness?

GAGE'S POV - EMPTY BEACH

GAGE
Hey, Dodd! Dude!

Getting no reply, he shrugs and moves off.

As the camera PANS BACK, we HEAR a sharp SCREAM - nearly drowned out by the nearby crashing waves -- and a sickening, wet, RIPPING sound. The screaming stops.

Then, a SHADOWY HUMANOID FIGURE rises up from behind a dune to move off, toward the sea. LOW ANGLE on a PILE of TORN CLOTHES and REMAINS -- cartilage and skin, STEAM rising off it in the cool night air. Clearly visible is the tattoo of the cigar-smoking shark.

BLACK OUT.

END OF TEASER

Act One

INT. WILLOW'S COMPUTER CLASS -THE NEXT MORNING

To the CLICKETY-CLICKING of several computer keyboards being typed upon, Willow walks among the desks of students working at their terminals. Peering over their shoulders, she's very into her nurturing teacher role.

WILLOW'S POV - COMPUTER MONITORS

All displaying PIE CHARTS in progress.

WILLOW

Okay, really good pie charts, guys.
Good, good, good.

She stops at Gage's desk, whom we recognize from the teaser.

WILLOW

Gage, your pie chart... It's looking
a lot like solitaire...
(looking closer)
with naked ladies on the cards.

GAGE

What's your point?

THE BELL RINGS.

WILLOW

No point.

As Gage and the rest of the students file out,

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

enters, pushing through the tide of exiting students, like a salmon swimming upstream. Passing Gage, he gives him a gregarious pat on the shoulder.

SNYDER

Nice work in yesterday's meet, son.

Now let's go for it!

Gage barely pays attention to him as he merges with the rest of the student traffic. The classroom now empty, a scowling Snyder approaches Willow. She moves to greet him.

SNYDER

Rosenberg. How's the class --
everything in order?

WILLOW

Well, actually --

SNYDER

Great. I've been talking to the
board -- we're having trouble finding
a competent teacher this late in the
term. Do you think you can continue
subbing through finals?

WILLOW

Oh, sure. I like teaching.

SNYDER

Isn't that nice. You're a team
player and I like that. A team
player wants everyone on the team
to succeed. Wants everyone to pass.

WILLOW

(not getting the
segue)

Uh, yeah, okay...

SNYDER

I understand there's a problem with
Gage Petronzi.

WILLOW

Oh, good, then you know. Well,
besides the behavior problem, he
won't do homework, his test scores
are, well, actually he doesn't have
any test scores since he never shows
up when we have--

Snyder waves her off dismissively.

SNYDER

I'm not interested in any of that.
I'm interested in why, when this
school is on the brink of winning its
first State Championship in fifteen
years, you slap a crucial member of
the team with a failing grade that
would force his removal. Is this how
you show your school spirit?

WILLOW

Yes. I mean, no. I mean, I'm just trying to grade fairly.

SNYDER

Gage is a champion. He's under more pressure than the other students. And I think we need to cut him some slack.

He turns on his heels and walks away. Willow watches him go.

WILLOW

You're asking me to change his grade.

Snyder stops and turns to her.

SNYDER

I never said any such thing. All I'm suggesting is you recheck your figures. I think you'll find a grade more fitting to an athlete of Gage's stature. Perhaps something in a 'D.'

He swivels around, and exits.

ON WILLOW

She exhales in frustration.

INT. HALLWAY - A SHORT TIME LATER (DAY)

Willow is walking with Cordelia and Xander, who is clearly (though figuratively) bent out of shape.

XANDER

Just like that? He actually told you to alter his grade.

WILLOW

Exactly. Except for the actually telling me to. But he made it perfectly clear what he wasn't telling me.

XANDER

That is wrong. Big, fat, spanking wrong. It's a slap in the face to every one of us that worked hard and studied long hours to earn our D's.

CORDELIA

Xander, I know you take pride in being the voice of the common wuss, but the truth is certain people are entitled to special privileges. They're called winners. That's the way the world works.

XANDER

And about that nutty "all men are
created equal" thing?

CORDELIA
(rolling her eyes)
Propaganda spouted by the ugly and
less deserving.

XANDER
I think it was Lincoln.

CORDELIA
Disgusting mole and a stupid hat.

WILLOW
Actually it was Jefferson.

CORDELIA
Kept slaves.
(a challenge)
Got any more?

XANDER
You know what really grates my
cheese? Buffy's not here to share my
moral outrage about swim team perks...

EXT. CAMPUS PARKING LOT - MEANWHILE (DAY)

A Mustang pulls into a space and parks.

XANDER (V.O.)
She's too busy being one of them.

INT. CAMERON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Cameron shuts off the engine as he continues what's obviously been a drawn out
monologue. Buffy sits beside him, bored senseless. The bloom is off the rose.

CAMERON
See, when I'm out in the vastness of
the ocean, I never feel alone. It's
like the sea is an old friend of
mine. You ever hear of Gertrude Ederle?

BUFFY
(her brain dribbling out)
No. No, I haven't, Cam.

CAMERON
First woman to swim the English
Channel. Same thing. She used to
talk to the ocean. Carry on entire
conversations. I do that
sometimes... Once---

BUFFY
(that's it)
Listen, Cam, thanks again. I'd

forgotten how nice it is to just
talk... or, in my case, listen,
without any romantic pressure.

CAMERON

Hey, I'm not about pressure. I want
you comfortable.

BUFFY

Oh, I'm comfy. I'm practically
nodding off! That's how comfy I --

CAMERON

Are you wearing a bra?

Buffy reacts, stunned, as if slapped across the face. Then:

BUFFY

What?

Not hearing her, he casually brushes his hand along her arm.

CAMERON

C'mon, tell me you haven't been
thinking about this ever since last
night.

BUFFY

What I'm thinking about is how much
I'd better get out of here.

As she reaches for the door handle, the electronic door lock is tripped with a sharp
"CLUNK."

INSERT: Cameron's hand on the door lock controls.

CAMERON

Relax. I'm not going to hurt you.

BUFFY

Oh, I'm not worried about me.

He moves in to grope her, roughly. In a flash, she seizes his roving arm with her
right hand, and slams his face into the steering wheel with her left. His car horn
blares, the force causing it to stick.

CAMERON

Ow! You... broke my nose!

As the horn continues its din, Buffy looks up to see the disapproving visage of

PRINCIPAL SNYDER

staring back at her through the windshield.

INT. INFIRMARY - A LITTLE LATER (DAY)

CLOSE ON a chemical ice pack being squeezed until it makes an audible "POP."

ANGLE: NURSE GREENLIEGH

an older, stocky woman, shakes the ice pack then hands it to

CAMERON

who holds it to his swollen nose, as he sits in a chair, an ace bandage wrapped around his wrist.

PULL BACK to find SNYDER and BUFFY in the foreground, as she defends herself.

BUFFY
I wasn't the attacker. I was the
attacked.

SNYDER
That's not how it looked from
where I was standing.

CAMERON
I don't know what happened. First
she leads me on, then she goes
schizo on me.

BUFFY
(livid)
Lead you on?! When did I lead
you on?!

CAMERON
(to Snyder)
C'mon, look at the way she dresses.

Snyder nods. Buffy is suddenly self-conscious.

COACH MARIN, a hulking bear of a man, enters.

SNYDER
(greeting him)
Coach.

Marin nods to Snyder, gives Buffy a cursory glance, then crosses to Cameron. Snyder signals for Buffy to sit.

COACH MARIN
How we doing, Cam?

SNYDER
Coach Marin. How bad does it look?

COACH MARIN
Well, luckily his nose isn't broken.
But it sure as hell's gonna sting for
a couple of days.

Snyder pulls him away for a more privacy.

SNYDER

I mean, our chances of winning
the State Championship. Can we
still do it?

COACH MARIN

Oh. I'm gonna need Cameron back a
hundred and ten percent. He's the
best swimmer I got, now that Dodd...

He trails off. Buffy notices his disturbed expression.

BUFFY

What happened to Dodd?

Snyder and Marin share a look. Then Snyder turns on Buffy.

SNYDER

That's none of your concern.
(re: Cameron)
You'd better hope that boy's nose
heals before the meet this Friday.

The coach turns back to Cameron.

COACH MARIN

Walker, you better hit the steam room
when you're done here. Try to keep
those sinuses clear.
(to Nurse)
Ruthie, you take care of my boy.

NURSE GREENLIEGH

looks up from her paperwork.

NURSE GREENLIEGH

I always do.

MARIN

turns back to Buffy.

COACH MARIN

And you, try to dress more
appropriately from now on. This
isn't a dance club.

Marin and Snyder exit and Buffy's jaw drops.

INT. LIBRARY - A BIT LATER (DAY)

Willow and Xander are at the table with Giles. They'd been working at something as
the table's littered with open books. At the moment, they patiently watch

BUFFY rant, having just entered.

BUFFY

So now they're treating me like I'm the baddie. Just because he has a sprained wrist and a bloody nose...
(realizing it doesn't look good)
and I don't have a scratch... Which, granted, on the surface hurts my case a little, but, meanwhile, Cameron gets away with it because he's on the "aren't we the most" swim team, who, by the way, if no one's noticed, have been acting like real jerks lately...

She suddenly notices the books and realizes everyone's just looking at her. She gets it. Something's happened.

BUFFY

(cautiously)

And what's new with you guys?

GILES

Thank you for taking an interest. Apparently, some remains were discovered on the beach this morning. Human remains.

WILLOW

Dodd McAlvy's remains.

BUFFY

Vampires?

GILES

No. He was eviscerated. Nothing left but skin and cartilage.

XANDER

In other words... "This was no boating accident!"

BUFFY

(to Giles)

So, something just split him open and ate out his insides?

WILLOW

Like an Oreo cookie.

The others look at her.

WILLOW

Except, you know, without the chocolatey cookie goodness.

GILES

Principal Snyder's instructed the faculty to keep the news quiet for

now so as not to unduly upset the students.

XANDER
For "students," read "swim team."

WILLOW
So, we're looking for a beastie.

GILES
That eats humans whole, except for the skin.

BUFFY
Doesn't make sense.

XANDER
(agreeing)
Yeah! Skin's the best part!

BUFFY
Any demons with high cholesterol?
(off Giles' look)
Later on, you're gonna think about that and you're gonna laugh.

INT. STEAM ROOM - LATER (DAY)

CAMERON

sits alone, in a towel, gently nursing his swollen nose.

We HEAR a HISS as fresh steam blows in, then quiet again, except for a faint DRIP.

He leans back and closes his eyes.

PUSH in on him. Closer.

INT. OUTSIDE STEAM ROOM - AT THE MOMENT (DAY)

SOMETHING'S POV - MOVING THROUGH THE LOCKER ROOM

slowly, but deliberately, toward the steam room door.

INT. STEAM ROOM - MEANWHILE (DAY)

CLOSE ON Cameron's face. His eyes slowly open, as if he'd heard... what? He listens for a moment, then satisfied, closes his eyes again.

The door JERKS OPEN and Cameron jumps with a start.

ANGLE: COACH MARIN

framed in the doorway.

COACH MARIN
Okay, son. I think you've had

enough. Time to hit the shower.

He lets the door fall closed. Cameron's heart beats like a Keith Moon solo.

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

Xander crosses from the hall toward the soda machine, counting out change.

XANDER
Too much research. Need beverage.

He collides with Cameron, who keeps going as Xander's change spills everywhere.

CAMERON
Watch it.

XANDER
(picking up change)
Oh, forgive me, your swimteamliness.

CAMERON
Loser.

Cameron continues on toward the cafeteria.

XANDER
Liking the nose, Cam. Good look
for you.

Cameron stops, turns.

CAMERON
Meaning what?

XANDER
Meaning Buffy must not be on your
list of privileges after all. Man,
I love it when you guys mess with her.

Cameron considers attacking Xander. Then --

CAMERON
You're lucky I'm hungry.

He heads toward the cafeteria.

XANDER
Cafeteria's closed.

CAMERON
Not to me.

INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The lights are off in here, moonlight streaming in through the windows. Cameron makes his way toward the back.

He stops, hearing something. Moves forward more slowly. Sniffs, his face registering

disgust.

CAMERON
God, what is that?

INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Xander puts in the last of his change, pondering.

XANDER
Grape, orange. Grape, orange.

A BLOOD CURDLING SCREAM -- accompanied by the sound of tearing and tables being knocked over -- emits from the cafeteria.

Xander starts, then heads into:

INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Xander enters, runs well in, then stops, looking down.

At his feet lay a pile of skin and Cam's torn clothes. Fighting the terror welling up inside him, he opens his mouth to call for help.

XANDER
Anybody, hel--

He turns and finds himself face to face with

A NIGHTMARE

The thing has a spiny head, like a fish; palpitating gills at the side of its neck; large cold black bulging eyes that never close.

Its gaping piranha-toothed jaw widens and lets out a PRIMAL CROAKING SCREECH.

So does Xander.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

Act Two

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

CORDELIA AND XANDER

are at the table, a large sketch pad sits in her lap. He stands over her shoulder, antsy. She draws as he talks.

XANDER
(re: sketch)
No, its mouth was bigger, and
turned downward.
(demonstrating)

Like this. And with more teeth.

CORDELIA
(losing patience)
O-kay!

XANDER
And what's that? I said gills, not
dimples.

Cordelia's had it with him. She puts down her pencil.

CORDELIA
I'm doing the best I can.

ANGLE: SKETCH

-- an approximate rendering of the Gill Monster, with many differences, including,
but not limited to, a too big mouth with too many teeth.

GILES (O.S.)
Is this what you saw, Xander?

XANDER

shifting restlessly.

XANDER
(unconvincingly)
Ye-ah. I think so... Pretty much.

GILES
(eyeing him)
You're not sure.

XANDER
(defensively)
Well, it was dark. The think went
out the window pretty quick. And I
was... a little shocked when I saw it
and...

CORDELIA
Go ahead, say it. You ran like a
woman.

Xander shoots her a look.

XANDER
Hey, if you saw this thing, you'd run
like a woman, too.

Willow, holding a computer printout, enters with Buffy.

WILLOW
Buffy was right. According to the
statistics, Dodd and Cameron were

the best swimmers on the team.

BUFFY

First and second, actually. And if my theory's correct, that means Gage Petronzi, the third best swimmer, may be the next item on the menu.

CORDELIA

God, this is so sad. We're never going to win one State Championship now.
(an anguished insight)
I think I've lost the will to cheerlead.

XANDER

Raise your hand if you feel her pain.

No one does. Giles moves to Buffy.

GILES

If you're proposing these killings are not random, that would indicate a revenge motive.

BUFFY

And raise the possibility that someone brought forth this sea demon from whence it came to carry out that revenge.
(hearing herself)
"From whence it came?" I'm spending way too much time around you.

XANDER

Who hates the swim team that much?
(off their looks)
Besides me, I mean.

WILLOW

thinks for a half beat, then excitedly raises her hand.

WILLOW

Oo...

BUFFY

Willow?

WILLOW

Jonathon! He was bullied by Dodd on the beach, remember?

BUFFY

(considering)
And he did say he can take care of those guys himself. Good call, Will.

You should question him.

WILLOW
Really? Me?
(into it)
I'll crack him like an egg.

GILES
Meanwhile, I think swimmer
number three might benefit from
your protection and watchful eye.
Discreetly, of course.

BUFFY
I'm on it.

She exits.

XANDER
(to Giles)
What about me? What can I do?

CORDELIA
Well, you could go out in the parking
lot and practice running like a man.

Xander gives her a look.

INT. LOUNGE - DAY

GAGE

is at a table, with his feet up, playing with a Gameboy.

PAN ACROSS THE ROOM to BUFFY

at another table, casually steals glances at him, as she pretends to flip through a magazine.

HER POV - GAGE LOOKS UP

in her general direction.

BUFFY

immediately averts her eyes, going so far as to reach down and "adjust" her shoe.

INT. COMPUTER CLASS - MEANWHILE (DAY)

The room's dark, except for a desk lamp. Jonathon sits alone near the front of the room. Willow sits on the edge of her desk, and stares at him for several beats.

WILLOW
So, you tried out for the swim team
twice and never made it?

JONATHON

I'm asthmatic. I couldn't keep up.

WILLOW
You resented it, didn't you?

JONATHON
Maybe.

WILLOW
You hated being pushed around by
Dodd and the others.

JONATHON
So?

WILLOW
You wanted revenge, didn't you?
Didn't you?!

JONATHON
Yeah. Okay. I did!

Willow smiles from ear to ear, a little cocky. Now moving in for the kill.

WILLOW
So you delved into the black arts
and conjured up a hellbeast from
the ocean's depths to wreak your
vengeance.

JONATHON squints at her.

WILLOW
(weakly)
Didn't you?

JONATHON
What? No, I snuck in yesterday and
peed in the pool.

Willow's smile slowly fades.

WILLOW
(disappointed)
Oh.
(then, disgusted)
Ew.

INT. LOUNGE - LATER (DAY)

PrIncipal Snyder and Coach Marin walk together, talking.

COACH MARIN
This is such a blow. Sooner or
later the rest of my boys are gonna
find out. How can I ask them to swim?

SNYDER
It's a terrible, terrible tragedy.

We all feel your loss, Coach. I don't know two finer boys than Cameron and... that other one.

He stops the coach, turns to him.

SNYDER

But I know they would want their friends to go on and win that State Championship. It's time to think of the team.

COACH MARIN

I don't have a full team as it is. If we don't find someone at tryouts this afternoon we won't be eligible to compete.

As they start off again --

SNYDER

You'll find someone. All he has to do is wear a bathing suit, right?

They clear frame, revealing Xander, who has been listening. After a moment, he follows them out of frame.

INT. BRONZE - NIGHT

Buffy, her hair secured fetchingly into a loose bun, with two ornate wooden chopsticks.

Sips her drink as she watches

BUFFY'S POV - GAGE

shooting pool, by himself. As he lines up a shot, he looks up and sees her.

BUFFY turns and moves past a pillar. Gage confronts her on the other side of it.

GAGE

This me and my shadow act is getting old. What do you want from me?

BUFFY

(off-guard)

Oh, I um... Okay. It's a little embarrassing, but, um...

(blurting out)

I'm a swim groupie.

GAGE

(squinting at her)

Uh huh.

BUFFY

Yep. There's just something about the smell of chlorine on a guy.

Hmm, baby--

Gage turns to walk away, but Buffy quickly BLOCKS HIM. She appears tiny next to his large athletic frame.

BUFFY

Okay, my sex appeal seems to be on the fritz today, so I'll straight shoot for a while. There's some... thing lurking around making filets out of the populace and i think you might be next.

GAGE

Uh huh. And you think that because...

BUFFY

It's already attacked... it's already killed some people.

Gage looks at her for a few beats.

GAGE

You're one twisted sister, you know that? Go find someone else to harass.

He PUSHES her out of his way and moves to the exit. Buffy glares, doesn't follow.

EXT. BRONZE - MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT)

ANGLE: GAGE

Walking down the deserted alley.

GAGE

(to himself)

Little wacko bitch pain in the--

From out of nowhere:

VOICE (O.S.)

You've got to be talking about Buffy.

Gage jumps, then sees

ANGLE: ANGEL

partially visible in the soft glow of a street lamp. He smiles at Gage, who eyes him, warily.

GAGE

How'd you know?

ANGEL

She and I... had a thing once.
Biggest mistake of my life.

GAGE

My condolences, dude.

He continues on his way. Angel falls into step with him.

ANGEL
She's a real head tripper.

GAGE
Tell me about it. The girl thinks
she's God's gift or something.

ANGEL
Who is she, the Chosen One?

GAGE
Exactly.

ANGEL
You know, what she really needs is
for someone to knock her down a few
notches.

GAGE

enjoying that idea.

GAGE
That'd be sweet. Anyone in mind?

ANGEL (O.S.)
You're in luck, friend...

Gage turns to see

ANGEL, IN FULL VAMPIRE GLORY.

Gage's eyes go wide with terror.

ANGEL
It so happens, I'm recruiting.

Fangs bared, he lunges at Gage's throat.

ANGLE: BRONZE DOOR

as Buffy exits, in time to hear:

GAGE (O.S.)
Hey! Get off! Noooo!

She runs. Rounding the corner, she stops in her tracks, surprised.

HER POV - GAGE

dazed, but very much alive. He is holding his neck, in a daze, up against the alley
wall.

Next to him is Angel, wincing and SPITTING, as if he's tasted battery acid. He

suddenly senses her and looks up. Without a word, and before he can react, Buffy nails him with a roundhouse kick to the face, which sends him reeling back.

She reaches up to her bun, and pulls out the two THIN WOODEN STAKES. Her hair falls to her shoulders as she shakes it out. Angel stops.

ANGEL

Why, Miss Summers... You're beautiful.

Buffy stands, ready to attack, stakes poised.

Angel suddenly grabs Gage and hurls him into Buffy, sending them both sprawling. He hurries off, still spitting out the taste of Gage's blood.

Buffy helps Gage up, grimly watching Angel disappear.

GAGE

So that... Was that the thing that
killed Cameron?

BUFFY

No. That was something else.

GAGE

Something else?!

She nods.

BUFFY

Unfortunately, there are a lot of
something elses in this town.

As he takes this in...

BUFFY

Well... g'night.

She turns and casually walks away, TOWARD CAMERA, Gage in b.g. He suddenly snaps out of it and runs up to join her.

GAGE

Walk me home?

She smiles, wryly as they continue to walk OUT OF FRAME.

INT. POOL AREA/SWIM PRACTICE - THE NEXT DAY

COACH MARIN

Blows a whistle as swimmers dive in for a practice run.

GAGE gets out of the pool and turns to wave at

ANGLE: BUFFY

who sits in the bleachers with Willow and Cordy. She waves back.

CORDELIA

He spit it out? I thought Angel
liked blood.

BUFFY
He usually does.

WILLOW
You think his eyes were too big for
his stomach?

BUFFY
I think there was something in Gage's
blood Angel didn't like. As, for
example, steroids.

WILLOW
That would explain all their
behavioral changes.

CORDELIA
And the winning streak.

WILLOW
Maybe whatever is in their blood is
what's attracting this creature to
them!

BUFFY
(to Cordy)
Any luck researching our fish monster?

CORDELIA
Zippo. We couldn't find any sea
demons that match the description
that Xander gave us. Not that
Chicken Little was much of a witness.
(then)
Oh, my.

CORDY'S POV - FEET AT LOCKER ROOM DOOR

PAN UP the body of a well-built swimmer in Speedos.

CORDELIA (O.S.)
That, girls, is my kind of...

We see the swimmer's face.

ANGLE: WILLOW

shocked.

WILLOW
Xander?

GIRLS' POV:

Xander notices them and is horrified. He tries to cover himself with his hands.

CORDELIA
Xander? What the hell are you doing?!

XANDER
(quietly)
I'm under cover.

BUFFY
You're not under much.

Willow lowers her eyes, but keeps sneaking peeks.

CORDELIA
Get out of here before somebody sees
you impersonating a swim team member.

XANDER
I don't do impersonations. I tried
out for the team last night and I
made it.

CORDELIA
Really?

Cordelia smiles. He's gone up nine levels of cool.

XANDER
Figure I can keep an eye on Gage and
the others when Buffy can't.

WILLOW
Like when you're nude. I meant to
say 'changing.'

ANGLE: MARIN

sees Xander talking to the girls.

COACH MARIN
Harris, you can flirt on your own time.

Xander leaves them.

CORDELIA
I'm dating a swimmer on the
Sunnydale swim team.

BUFFY
You can die happy.
(to Willow)
So, Will, what about Jonathon?
He involved?

WILLOW
No, he just, uh... he sort of peed in

the pool.

BUFFY
Oh. OH.

ANGLE: THEIR POV: XANDER

Dives into the pool. All the girls wince.

INT. STEAM ROOM - DAY

Post-practice. Xander sits in the steam room with Gage and another swimmer, SEAN. They all wear towels.

XANDER
Don't you guys get claustrophobic
in here?
(no answer)
I mean, what's the deal? You
perspire a lot and can't breathe.

SHIFT TO:

INT. LOCKER ROOM/JUST OUTSIDE THE STEAM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE: the grate outside the steam room.

XANDER (O. S.)
Or read. I mean, you could, but the
pages would probably get all wet...

The grate MOVES.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Buffy is standing just outside the locker room, pretending to read a notice on the wall.

The DOOR SWINGS open.

Xander comes out, towel drying his hair.

XANDER
You gotta love this undercover deal.
Twenty minutes in a hot room with a
bunch of sweaty guys.

BUFFY
Where's Gage?

XANDER
He was right behind me, putting his
sneakers on. But, they're not the
Velcro kind, so give him a couple of
extra minutes.

He touches her lightly on the shoulder.

XANDER
Tag, you're it.

He disappears around the corner.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Gage sits on a bench, putting his sneakers on. He SMELLS something rancid, and makes a face. He SNIFFS the air, checking under his arms, his sneakers... no... Trying to locate the source of the horrific smell, he walks to the bank of lockers.

Tension escalates as he OPENS one.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - DAY

ON BUFFY:

She paces, nervously.

Suddenly, a SCREAM comes from inside the locker room.

GAGE (O.S.)
Help! Help me!

She rushes in.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Buffy enters and sees

HER POV - GAGE AND THE GILL MONSTER

as the creature converges on Gage, near the grate outside the steam room.

BUFFY
Get behind me. Now! Do it!

He does. She sizes up the creature, contemplating her next move, as the creature approaches. Then it stops. Buffy looks at it quizzically. And that's when Gage screams.

She turns to find him doubled over.

BUFFY
Gage?

He bolts upright, his face twisted in agony and slick with sweat. Or slime. His hands suddenly go to his chest and Buffy watches, horrified, as his body SPLITS WIDE OPEN down the middle.

ANOTHER GILL MONSTER EMERGES from the molted casing that was once Gage Petronzi. ON BUFFY'S REACTION...

END OF ACT TWO

Act Three

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

THE TWO GILL MONSTERS

converge on Buffy as she backs away, their webbed feet SLAPPING aggressively on the hard floor. They BLOCK all exit potential.

A monster moves toward Buffy. She kick boxes him in his BELLY, and he rolls back, crashing into a locker.

The other creeps from behind. She whips around, jumps over a bench, and grabs a LACROSSE STICK from an open locker.

While she rams it into his face, the other one slithers back and grabs her shoulder with his PIRANHA-LIKE teeth.

CLOSE ON Buffy's face in anguish as the creature takes a healthy bite. She CRIES OUT in pain and backhands the creature, who staggers back, falls on its belly and SLITHERS down the open grate. As Buffy nurses her wounded shoulder, the other GILL MONSTER is about to spring when

COACH MARIN

grabs Buffy and pulls her away to safety. The Gill Monster does the same SLITHERING act down the hole.

INT. INFIRMARY - A SHORT TIME LATER - DAY

The nurse is finishing up dressing Buffy's wound.

NURSE GREENLIEGH

I don't think you'll need stitches,
but you should probably have your
family physician take a look at it.

WIDEN to see Giles and Marin standing over the table.

GILES

How are you?

BUFFY

I'm definitely feeling the burn.

The nurse exits. Giles turns to Marin.

GILES

Well, the good news is, it would
appear none of your team has
actually died.

BUFFY

But the bad news is that they're
monsters.

COACH MARIN
How could this happen?

GILES
Are you saying you don't know?

Giles stares levelly at the coach. The coach sits, defeated.

COACH MARIN
You work so hard, you start winning
suddenly... you like to think it's
just you, you're just inspiring the
boys to greatness. But in the back
of your mind, you wonder...

GILES
You never asked the boys if they were
taking anything?

COACH MARIN
(shakes his head)
Maybe I was afraid to.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - END OF DAY

ON WILLOW

sitting at her computer, while Buffy and Xander stand on either side of her, their
eyes glued to the screen.

BUFFY
(indicating screen)
There.

WILLOW
(reading)
"Dodd McAlvy... torn tendon. Gage
Petronzi... fractured wrist...
depression, headaches... "

BUFFY
It's all here in their school medical
records.

WILLOW
All symptomatic of steroid abuse.

XANDER
But is steroid abuse usually linked
with 'hey I'm a fish'?

WILLOW
There must be something else in the
mix. The point is, the boys were
obviously drugged.

BUFFY

And Nurse Greenliegh treated each and every one of them. She must have known.

WILLOW

If steroids are that dangerous, why would they do that to themselves?

BUFFY

The need to win. Winning equals trophies equals prestige for the school. You see how they're treated. It's been like that forever.

XANDER

Sure, discus throwers got the best seats at all the crucifixions.

BUFFY

Meanwhile, I'm breaking my nails battling the forces of evil and my French teacher can't even remember my name.

XANDER

So what's the drill? Get Nurse Greenliegh?

WILLOW

(vehemently)

Let's throw the book at her!

(off looks)

Or, a book...

BUFFY

She's probably gone home. It can wait. Xander, try to find out what these boys are taking, or at least how they're taking it. Pills, powder, syringes --

XANDER

I'm looking-around-guy.

WILLOW

(to Buffy)

What about you?

BUFFY

Giles is loading up the tranquilizer gun. We're going fishing.

INT. SEWER TUNNEL - NIGHT

It's very dark and creepy. Buffy and Giles move through the dank, filthy tunnel. She holds a FLASHLIGHT, and he holds his TRANQUILIZER GUN, as they trod through the murky sewage.

They HEAR SPLASHING ahead of them.

Buffy SHINES her flashlight in the direction of the noise, and Giles AIMS his tranquilizer gun, ready to shoot.

ANGLE: A RAT

making its way along the wall, retreating from them.

BUFFY and GILES

share a look, exhale warily, then continue on.

Passing the OPENING to an offshooting tunnel.

NEW ANGLE - FISH-GUY POV OF GILES AND BUFFY

sloshing back the way they came.

ANGLE: GILL MONSTER

watching them from the darkness.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

To establish.

INT. LOCKER ROOM/STEAM ROOM - MORNING

THE VISAGE OF XANDER

Through the THICK STEAM.

PULL BACK to see him and three other swimmers (among them, Sean) in towels. All of them, sans Xander, appear to be meditating. At least one is in a lotus position.

XANDER

I'm feeling good.

(no acknowledgment)

Loving this swimming.

(still ignored)

Had some carrot juice this morning,
a little wheat germ mixed in...

Woke me right up. Nothing like it...

Breakfast of state champions, you
betcha.

The other swimmers continue to meditate and breathe the steam deeply into their lungs. Xander cuts to the chase.

XANDER

Okay, so, when do we get our next dose?

Sean opens his eyes and looks at Xander.

SEAN

What do you mean?

XANDER
Who's carrying? I need a little
something to improve my performance.
Give me an edge.
(loud whisper)
The steroids!? Where are they?!

The other swimmers share a look, then laugh.

SEAN
You're soaking in it, Bud.

XANDER
Huh?

SEAN
(taking a deep breath)
Aromatherapy...

PUSH IN ON XANDER

His eyes darting around, as the realization sinks in. He tries to bottle his growing panic.

SEAN (O.S.)
It's in the steam.

XANDER
Ahh. The steam.
(anxiously)
And what steam would that be?

INT. POOL - DAY

Nurse Greenliegh is in heated discussion with Coach Marin, following him around the pool.

NURSE GREENLIEGH
It's got to stop, Carl. These poor
children --

COACH MARIN
Are you a quitter? here's no room
for quitters on this team.

NURSE GREENLIEGH
Listen to yourself! Do you
understand what's happening?

COACH MARIN
We're very close to perfecting this.
We just need to adjust the mix.

He exits, and she follows, into --

INT. PUMP ROOM - CONTINUOUS - DAY

NURSE GREENLIEGH
You can't be thinking of continuing

to expose the boys.

COACH MARIN
They're gonna be the best. I don't
settle for anything less.

NURSE GREENLIEGH
They're gonna be monsters! Don't
make this any worse. You've lost
three.

COACH MARIN
Lost? They're not lost.

NURSE GREENLIEGH
What?

He grabs her and shoves her -- she falls right into:

INT. GROTTO/PUMP ROOM (INTERCUT) - CONTINUOUS - DAY

She splashes down, surfaces again, looking up frantically.

NURSE GREENLIEGH
Carl! What are you doing?

COACH MARIN
Looking after my boys. They may be
out of the game right now, but we're
still a team.

She looks around, suddenly much more afraid. Turns, sensing movement.

COACH MARIN
And a team's gotta eat.

Her eyes go wide -- and she is suddenly sucked down under the surface.

Coach Marin looks contemptuously down at the water.

COACH MARIN
Quitter.

BLACK OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

Act Four

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Xander paces the floor nervously, as Buffy, Willow, Giles and Cordelia digest the new info.

GILES
They've been absorbing the steroid

mixture through the steam.

XANDER

Not they. We. Me. We need an
antidote, don't you think? Clock is
ticking, people.

BUFFY

Let's not break out the tartar sauce
yet. It's not like you were exposed
more than once.

Xander can only look at her.

BUFFY

(hopefully)
Twice?

XANDER

Three times a fishguy.

WILLOW

Whoa.

XANDER

What am I gonna do?

CORDELIA

You you you. What about me? It's
one thing to date a lame unpopular
guy. It's another thing to date the
Creature From the Blue Lagoon.

XANDER

(correcting her)

"Black" Lagoon. The creature from
the Blue Lagoon was Brooke Shields.
(as an afterthought)
And thanks so much for your support.

BUFFY

We need to find the rest of the swim
team and lock them up before they get
in touch with their inner halibut.

GILES

Yes, good. But we're also going to
need to know exactly what was in the
steroid gas so the hospital's
toxicology lab can develop an
antidote.

WILLOW

I'll have a little talk with Nurse
Greenliegh.

BUFFY

You're really liking this whole

interrogation routine, aren't you?

WILLOW

The trick is not to leave any marks.

BUFFY

Then I'm gonna visit the coach.
Somehow I just don't believe that all
he's been giving them is inspiration.

INT. PUMP ROOM - A LITTLE LATER (DAY)

The coach enters, followed by Buffy.

COACH MARIN

You've got quite an imagination,
Missy.

BUFFY

Right now I'm imagining you in jail.
(as to a child)
You're wearing a big, orange suit
and -- oh look! The guards are
beating you!

COACH MARIN

You don't have any proof that --

BUFFY

Tell me what you put in the
steam.

He stops. The facade drops.

COACH MARIN

After the fall of the Soviet Union,
documents came to light detailing
experiments with fish DNA on their
Olympic swimmers. Tarpon, mako
shark... But they never cracked it.

BUFFY

And you did. Sort of. Why?

COACH MARIN

What kind of a question is that? For
the win. To make my team the best
they could be. Do you understand we
have a shot at the State Championship?

BUFFY

Do you understand that I don't care?
It's over. There's not gonna be any
swim team this year.

COACH MARIN

Boy, when they were handing out
school spirit you didn't even get on

line, did you?

BUFFY

No, I was in the line for 'shred of
sanity.'

The coach raises a gun. Buffy stops.

BUFFY

Which you obviously skipped.

COACH MARIN

Get in the hole.

He motions to the manhole. Buffy moves toward it.

COACH MARIN

IN. NOW!

She drops in.

INT. GROTTO - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

HIS POV - BUFFY

nearly chest deep in murky water below the school.

HER POV - MARIN

through the hole, looking down.

COACH MARIN

You think I don't care about my boys.
But I do. They count on me.

BUFFY

(looking around)

So you're gonna feed me to them?

COACH MARIN

Oh, they've had their dinner.

ON BUFFY

She feels something brush up against her. She turns with a start, and sees, with
horror

HER POV - NURSE GREENLIEGH'S MASTICATED CORPSE floats by.

COACH MARIN

But boys have other needs.

Off Buffy's reaction...

INT. POOL - A LITTLE LATER (DAY)

Xander and Cordelia enter to find...

CORDELIA
No one. Willow and Giles must've
rounded up the rest of the swim team.

Xander neurotically rubs the sides of his neck.

XANDER
Does my neck look a little scaly to you?

CORDELIA
Of course it's scaly, the way you
keep rubbing it dry like an idiot.

He approaches the door to the locker room. He turns to her.

XANDER
I need to look in the mirror. Wait
here. But feel free to come in if
you hear me scream.

She looks concerned as he goes inside.

Cordelia walks around the pool, waiting. There is an eerie silence, and she watches
the reflection of the pool water dancing along the walls. Suddenly, she hears the
CREAK of the locker room door opening.

CORDELIA
(not looking)
So... Any gills yet?

She hears A SPLASH and turns to see the pool water RIPPLING.

CORDELIA
Xander, what are you--

As she bends down to look down into the pool.

A GILL MONSTER

is swimming along. Cordelia puts her hand up to scream, then, realizing...

CORDELIA
Xander?

The Gill Monster continues to swim. Cordelia paces it as she goes on:

CORDELIA
Oh, my god... Xander... Xander. It's
me. Cordelia. I-- I know you can't
answer me, but... this is my fault.
You joined the swim team to impress
me. You were so courageous and you
looked really hot in those Speedos.

In the background, the locker room door opens again, though this time Cordelia
doesn't hear it, and

XANDER enters.

He's taken aback to find Cordelia mid-conversation with the Monster. He slowly comes up behind her.

CORDELIA

I want you to know I still care for you, no matter what you look like.
We can still date -- or not date, but... I mean, I'll understand if you want to see other fish... And I'll try to make your quality of life the best it can be, whether you need little bath toys or whatever...

She has ended up kneeling by the shallow end where it swims.

XANDER
Uh, Cordy?

Cordelia reacts with a start and turns around.

XANDER
That's not me.

Cordelia looks back at the monster as it lunges from the pool at her. She screams. Xander takes Cordy's hand and runs with her out the door.

INT. LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER (DAY)

Giles locks the door of the book cage in which four swim team members are locked up.

GILES
Stay calm. Either we'll find an effective antidote, or... just stay calm.

Willow re-checks her list and makes a face.

WILLOW
Everyone's accounted for, except Sean.

Xander and Cordelia ENTER, overhearing.

CORDELIA
Oh, I think we can safely say we found Sean. He was in the pool, skinless-dipping.

Xander looks around.

XANDER
Where's Buffy?

WILLOW
She hasn't come back yet.

INT. GROTTO - MEANWHILE (DAY)

ON BUFFY

looking around for something to grab onto. A weapon, an escape... She listens. It's quiet, except for the steady dripping of the wet walls.

BUFFY
(quiet, worried)
This is just what my rep needs. That
I did it with the entire swim team.

Then, behind her...

TWO GILL MONSTERS

rise up slowly from the water, unseen by Buffy. After a beat, they submerge again.

INT. PUMP ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (DAY)

Xander approaches the room cautiously.

HIS POV: Coach Marin standing over the manhole.

XANDER
What's up, Coach?

The coach stands, visibly nervous.

COACH MARIN
Harris. How are you feeling?

XANDER
A little dry. Nothing a nice lemon
butter sauce won't cure. Where's Buffy?

The coach looks over at:

ANGLE: HIS GUN

sitting on top of something (I don't know what's in a pump room, okay?), off to the side between them.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GROTTO - MEANWHILE (DAY)

BUFFY reacts as if something's brushed her leg. Suddenly,

A GILL MONSTER

leaps out of the water at Buffy. She throws him off. He disappears under the murky water. Then ANOTHER one jumps. She pops him in the face, and he, too disappears. Then ANOTHER. They're fast, the water begins to froth with activity.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PUMP ROOM - SECONDS LATER (DAY)

The coach makes a dash for his gun, grabs it just as Xander grabs him. Xander twists his arm, makes him drop it.

XANDER
I don't like guns.

He slams his elbow into the coach's face, dropping him.

XANDER
Elbows are neat, though.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GROTTO - MEANWHILE (DAY)

Buffy's breathing heavy, still holding off the Gill Monsters, but she's losing steam. She's not sure if she can continue.

Then, she sees one, his head barely breaking the surface, making a run for her, like a shark bearing down on its prey. She stands as ready as she can to fend it off when suddenly

A HAND reaches down. She looks up and sees

BUFFY'S POV - XANDER

stretching as far as he can.

XANDER
Buffy! Hurry!

With all the Slayer strength she can muster, Buffy springs herself up. She grabs his hand and Xander pulls her out just as the charging Gill Monster leaps. Missing her, the creature splashes back down into the murkiness.

INT. PUMP ROOM - CONTINUOUS (DAY)

Xander pulls Buffy all the way out. She shivers from the combo of damp clothing and stone cold fear. Xander takes off his outer sweatshirt and slips it over her head.

BUFFY
Thanks.

XANDER
Just doing my part for our team.

In that instant,

COACH MARIN

rises up, smashing a wrench into Xander's head. He comes at Buffy as Xander crumples -- Buffy is tired, but fends him off with a kick -- that sends him into the hole.

She dives at the hole, reaches down.

BUFFY
Coach! Give me your hand --

The sounds of eating and screaming stop her. Xander crawls over to the hole, looks down as well.

BUFFY
(grim disgust)
Those boys really love their coach.

INT. LOUNGE - THE NEXT DAY

Buffy, Willow, Xander and Cordelia sit at a table.

XANDER
I've got to take a make-up Chem test
at three, and I'm meeting some of the
guys for plasma transfusions at five.
It's turned into quite the busy
afternoon.

BUFFY
The fun never stops with you, does it?

WILLOW
Giles seems pretty confident that the
treatments are going to work.

XANDER
Turning into a Creepy Crawler wasn't
in my "Top ten list of things to do
before I turn twenty."

CORDELIA
(to Xander)
I just want you to know that you've
really proven yourself to me. And
next year, you don't have to join the
new team if you don't want.

Xander looks at Cordy, touched.

CORDELIA
I'd be just as happy if you played
football.

Xander's face drops. Buffy and Willow share a smile. Giles enters the lounge and beelines over to their table.

GILES
The people from Animal Control just
left. Our creatures have apparently
made a dash for it. So to speak.

XANDER
No note?

WILLOW
Does that mean we have to hunt them

again?

BUFFY

I don't think so. I don't think
we'll see them anymore.

GILES

Where do you think they'll go?

BUFFY

Home.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Two scaly ridged backs break water, then disappear again. PAN TO see

ANGLE: A GILL MONSTER'S HEAD

it looks back at the CAMERA.

The head disappears into the black ocean.

BLACK OUT.

END OF SHOW